(b) Mid Day Meal scheme was extended to government and government aided upper primary schools and centres run under the Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and Alternative and Innovative Education (AIE) in 3479 Educationally Backward Blocks (EBBs) with effect from 1.10.2007, of which, 737 blocks were in Andhra Pradesh. With effect from 1.4.2008, it has been extended to government and government aided upper primary schools and EGS and AIE centres, across the country.

(c) A total of about 68,87,278 children viz. 50,73,213 at primary and 18,14,065 at upper primary are availing mid-day meals during the current year (2008-09).

Ensuring education upto 14 years of age

2184. SHRI MOINUL HASSAN: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Parliament had unanimously amended Article 21(A) in December, 2002 to ensure education for children upto the age of 14 years from six years; and

(b) if so, the steps taken to enact a law in this respect?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI M.A.A. FATMI): (a) The Constitutional (Eighty Sixth) Amendment Act 2002 notified on 13th December 2002 inserted Article 21 A in the Constitution, which seeks to make education a Fundamental Right for children in the age group of 6-14 years by providing that "*the State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such manner as the State may, by law, determine*".

(b) A Bill to give effect to the Constitutional (Eighty Sixth) Amendment Act, 2002 has been introduced in the Rajya Sabha on 15.12.2008.

Opening a Central university in Kalahandi

2185. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Orissa Government has made a request for opening a Central university in Kalahandi district of Orissa, which is the most backward tribaldominated region of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what is the time-frame within which the request of the State Government would be considered and agreed to?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) and (b) With a view to providing one Central university to each of the sixteen States, which do not have Central university, including Orissa, the Central University Bill 2008 has been introduced in the Lok Sabha on 23.10.2008. According to the provisions of clause 3(5) of the Bill, the headquarters of each of the new Central university shall be such as may be specified by the Central Government by notification in the official gazette. As regards Orissa, the State Government